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Author(s): Donald Smalley

Source: *Indiana Magazine of History*, September, 1946, Vol. 42, No. 3 (September, 1946), pp. 249-267

Published by: Indiana University Press

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The Logansport *Telegraph* and the Monster of the Indiana Lakes

DONALD SMALLEY

The Logansport *Telegraph* on July 21, 1838, printed its first story upon a monster, already famed in Indian legend, that had made a fresh appearance in Lake Manitou near Rochester—a monster sixty feet long with a head three feet in width and a dingy coat variegated by bright yellow spots. By the end of eight weeks, the monster and its exploits were known not merely in Indianapolis and Cincinnati, but in such far-off cities as New York and Boston.[1] The Mayville, New York, *Sentinel* indignantly decried the tale, refusing to believe in the existence of either the monster or the lake in which it sported;[2] but the Buffalo *Commercial Advertiser* hoped that tidings of this "Western Monster" would flourish, so that lovers of marvel would not feel the loss of the Nahant sea serpent, which had not appeared as yet that year.[3]

Stories of the monster did flourish. It became the subject of a rather remarkable ode and the object of a public meeting. Its horrific likeness was portrayed in the *Telegraph* at half-column length. It became a last survivor of the prehistoric mammoth. Plans were made for sending out a "scientific expedition" to sound Lake Manitou and to haul the creature from the deeps by means of a large boat and rafts as a martyr to learning. It was declared to live in Bass Lake, where bones of its former companions still strewed the bank; it swam by vast subterranean passages to Lake Maxinkuckee. All in all, the articles are a curious compound made up in nearly equal proportions of the legends of the Potawatomi who were being removed from the state at the very time when the stories were printed,[4] and the literary and scientific resources of pioneer Logansport.

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[1] See Indianapolis, *Indiana Democrat*, August 8, 1838; Cincinnati, Ohio, *The Daily Evening Post*, August 18, 1838; *The New-York Mirror*, September 1, 1838; Boston, *The Transcript*, August 13, 1838.

[2] Quoted in the Logansport, Indiana, *Telegraph*, September 15, 1838.

[3] Quoted in the Boston *Transcript*, August 13, 1838.

[4] In 1836, the Indian Agent Colonel Abel C. Pepper bought the Potawatomi's remaining lands from the chiefs at one dollar per acre with the agreement that the Indians could remain for two years. There were clashes in August, 1838, between the Indians and squatters who had come in anticipation of the expiration of this agreement. On August 29, the Cass and Miami county militia under John Tipton left

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As this brief summary suggests, the accounts of the Indiana monster grew rapidly to something more than the proportions of a common "snake" story. By September 15, 1838, the time of the last article, they had become a good deal more; they had expanded to include much of what Logansport thought and felt about the still somewhat mysterious regions opening up as the Potawatomi left the state. By means of these accounts, we can recapture something of the outlook of our forefathers upon their brave, but slightly puzzling, new world.

The authorship of the articles in the *Telegraph* is apt to remain a matter of conjecture, but it seems probable that John Brown Dillon had the most important hand in them. Born about 1808 at Wellsburg in what is now West Virginia, Dillon removed to Cincinnati in 1825 and worked there as a compositor for the Cincinnati *Gazette*. He came to Logansport in 1834 to study law; but though admitted to the bar, he did not become a practicing lawyer.[5] Dillon became associate editor and publisher of the *Telegraph* on August 16, 1834.[6] He seems to have been the principal editor of the

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Logansport to herd the Indians together and remove them from the state. The procession of about eight hundred Potawatomi reached Logansport on September 6 and remained at the encampment on Honey Creek for three days and three nights before again taking up the terrible march, which was to claim the lives of one-fifth of the band before they reached their destination on the Osage River in Kansas. On September 16, they had reached Danville, Illinois, and on September 18, Tipton relinquished the command to Judge William Polke. See Logan Esarey, *A History of Indiana* (2 vols., Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1924), I, 377-385, and Benjamin F. Stuart, "The Deportation of Menominee and his Tribe of the Pottawattomie Indians," *Indiana Magazine of History* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1905-), XVIII (1922), 255-256; Irving McKee, "The Trail of Death, Letters of Benjamin Marie Petit," Indiana Historical Society, *Publications* (Indianapolis, Indiana, 1895-), XIV (1944), 1-141.

[5] For the fullest account of Dillon's life, see General John Coburn's, "Life and Services of John B. Dillon," Indiana Historical Society, *Publications*, II (1895), 39-62.

[6] At the time when Dillon joined the paper, it was edited and published by Stanislaus Lasselle. On July 9, 1836, Stanislaus Lasselle sold his share in the paper, at that time called *The Canal Telegraph*, to his brother Hyacinth Lasselle, Jr. The name was changed to *The Telegraph*. When Dillon severed his connection with the paper on January 22, 1842, Hyacinth Lasselle, Jr., took over exclusive management of the *Telegraph*, which remained under his control until March 24, 1849, when it was discontinued. Thomas Helm (ed.), *History of Cass County, Indiana* (Chicago, 1886), 453.

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paper in 1838.[7] In all likelihood it was Dillon who wrote the three articles signed "A Visitor to the Lake." I assume that these articles were written by an editor of the *Telegraph* because the second assails the senior editor of the Logansport *Herald* as only a rival editor would be apt to assail him and the third defends the *Telegraph* as only an editor would be apt to defend it. Dillon rather than his colleague, Hyacinth Lasselle, Jr., seems the probable author not only because he was apparently the principal editor but also because he displays elsewhere a command of phrasing, vocabulary, and information equal to that exhibited in the articles, whereas Lasselle's contributions, where they can be identified, do not rise above good journeywork.

John Brown Dillon was, of course, to become in later years the noted historian whose *A History of Indiana* (1859) is still a standard work. In his writings as a historian, there is little suggestion of the spirit of playfulness that is evident in the articles of "A Visitor to the Lake"; but we have a clew to this aspect of the young Dillon's character in "Dillon's April Fool," as recorded by Judge Horace P. Biddle.[8] We have also the word of one biographer that "hoary border legends, traditional story, but more especially local history" absorbed Dillon's mind during his early years in Logansport.[9] Such interests run strongly through the articles of "A Visitor

[7] Though nominally Dillon shared the editorship with Hyacinth Lasselle, Jr., Dillon seems to have devoted his full time to the paper while Lasselle must have given much time to his combined dry goods, hardware, and book store, advertisements for which appeared weekly in the *Canal Telegraph*. In the issue of August 5, 1837, Dillon states that "Circumstances of recent occurrence will require my undivided attention to the regular publication of the paper in which, as a partner, I am interested." Dillon is often spoken of as *the* editor of the *Telegraph*, see issues of November 26, 1836, July 27, 1839, see also the *Herald*, September 27, 1838, October 4, 1838, and Coburn's, "Life and Services of John B. Dillon," Indiana Historical Society, *Publications*, II, 57.

[8] On April 1, 1840, Dillon posted on the billboard of a Logansport hotel a note with the following legend:

"There will be exhibited at the court house this evening a living manthorp, from 8 to 10 o'clock.

"SIR ROGER DE COVERLY, Manager."

There was much rummaging on the part of the learned young men of Logansport in encyclopedias and books on natural history before it was realized that *manthorp* is but a combination of the Old English words for *man* and *village*, and that Sir Roger de Coverley is not often to be met with outside the pages of the *Spectator*. Coburn, "Life and Services of John B. Dillon," Indiana Historical Society, *Publications*, II, 61.

[9] Ben Douglass, "In Memoriam," in John B. Dillon, *Oddities of Colonial Legislation in America* (Indianapolis, Indiana, 1879), 4-8.

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to the Lake." Moreover, the whimsical ode "To the Northern Monster" signed "Logan" may well have come from Dillon, who had made a name for himself while at Cincinnati as a poet.[10]

The two articles signed "X.Y.Z." are ostensibly by another hand, for on September 15, 1838, the editor of the *Telegraph* invites "X.Y.Z." to send further communications.[11] It is possible that these articles were written by George Winter, Indiana's first artist of note, for his name seems to have been associated with the story of the monster.[12] My own opinion, which I should not care to press, is that Dillon wrote these articles also, merely resorting to the common editorial fiction of an additional contributor to add interest to his tale. Certainly these contributions are remarkably similar to the articles of "A Visitor to the Lake" in style and point of view.

These are admittedly conjectures rather than statements

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[10] See William T. Coggeshall, *The Poets and Poetry of the West* (Columbus, Ohio, 1860), 109-112; and William H. Venable, *Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1891), 27-28, 73n. The poem "To the Northern Monster" is unlike other frequent contributions of verse to the *Telegraph*; it is distinguishable by the author's range of vocabulary and his rather deft use of a satirical style. It seems to be hurried work from a writer who could do better things when not confronted with a deadline.

[11] " 'The Indian Tradition of Cedar Lake,' published in this day's paper will be found interesting. We tender our thanks to the author of the communication; and at the same time express a hope that he will continue his favors, as often as his leisure or inclination will permit." Logansport, Indiana, *Telegraph*, September 15, 1838.

[12] Sandford C. Cox briefly recounts the story of the monster in *Recollections of the Early Settlements of the Wabash Valley* (Lafayette, Indiana, 1860), 136-137. Cox speaks of a communication to the *Telegraph* "in the year 1837" which was "supposed to have been written by our Artist George Winter." No article upon the monster seems to have appeared in either the *Telegraph* or the *Herald* during 1837. Cox's account is apparently based upon his memories of the articles of 1838, and oral retellings of the story, after the lapse of twenty years. However, he gives some details not included in the articles; these will be employed in footnotes later in this paper. Jehu Z. Powell, *History of Cass County, Indiana* (2 vols., Chicago, 1913), I, 311, devotes two paragraphs to the story of the monster. He speaks of an article in an 1837 *Telegraph* written by William Winter; but Powell's account seems to be only an inaccurate redaction of Cox's statements. George Winter, "the Catlin of Indiana," was born at Portsea, England, in 1810. He studied art at the Royal Academy, London, for four years before coming to New York in 1830. He came to Logansport in 1837 to paint pictures of the Indians, and he remained at Logansport until 1850, when he removed to Lafayette. He died at Lafayette in 1876. See George S. Cottman, "George Winter, Artist," *Indiana Magazine of History*, I (1905), 111-114. See also "Winter's Description of Frances Slocum," in *ibid.*, 115-118.

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of fact, though Dillon's identity with "A Visitor to the Lake" seems at least highly probable. In any event, the articles are in good part the work of the community rather than of one or two individuals. The "men named Robinson," the surveyor of the government purchase on Lake Manitou, the workmen at the Potawatomi mills, Mr. Linsey, General Milroy all figure in the accounts of the monster. "Some gentlemen in town" propose the expedition to search out the creature. The editors of the *Herald* take a hand in the direction of the legend. And Mr. McCartney, the former husband of No-cum-mic-qua, assumes a major role as a man versed in the lore of the Indian.

The articles from the Logansport *Telegraph* are given below, together with the occasional comments upon the monster which were printed in the Logansport *Herald*. The erratic spelling of the originals has been retained in all but the few instances where an emendation is indicated by brackets.

THE DEVIL'S LAKE.

In the northern portion of Indiana there are many beautiful little lakes which give great interest to a country somewhat open. About twenty-five miles from Logansport, and in the vicinity of Rochester, there is one of these lakes about two miles in length, half a mile in width, and of unknown depth. Soundings were once tried with a line of thirteen fathoms, but with no effect.

There is an ancient tradition of the Pottawattimie Indians relative to this lake, which has been handed down from generation to generation, and is now received by the white man with confirmed credence. The precise time at which the tradition was first received among the Indians cannot be determined—probably not a long time after the emigration of the Pottawattamies across the "hard waters" of the north, some centuries since, to this district of country, which was then occupied by the Miamies, by whose grant the Pottawattamies became possessed of the lands which they have held north of the Wabash. It appears that the tradition does not owe its origin to the superstitious fears of the red men; but that some gigantic creature inhabited the lake, and does at the present time, is beyond the probability of doubt.

This lake is called by the Indians "Lake Man-i-toe," or the Devil's Lake; and such is the terror in which it is held, that but few Indians would even dare to venture in a canoe upon its surface. The Indians will neither fish no bathe in the lake; such is the powerful conviction that "man-i-too" or the Evil Spirit, dwells in its chrystal waters. It may elicit a smile from the incredulous to assert gravely the fact that some very extraordinary creature claims monarchy of this beautiful lake. But the existence of a monster in this lake is not an object of more surprise to us than the remains of the Mastadon, whose teeth measures 18 inches—and which were found but two miles from town,

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in prairie through which the canal runs. Were there not assurances from men entitled to credibil[i]ty that a monster has been seen within a few days in the lake Man-i-too, it might be supposed the strange story originated in the superstitutious fears of the Aborigines.

When the Pottawattamie Mills were erecting some ten years since, at what is called the out-let of the lake,[13] the monster was seen by men known to Gen. Milroy,[14] under whose direction the Mills, I believe, were erected. There are persons in Logansport who questioned closely those who lately saw the myterious occupant of the lake, and are now convinced of this tradtion of Man-i-too being founded upon something more substantial than the basis of fish and snake stories generally.

But two weeks since some men by the name of Robinson were fishing in the lake, when they beheld with surprise the even surface of the water ruffled by something swimming rapidly, and which they suppose must have measured sixty feet. The Robinsons are respectable men, whose fears are not easily excited; yet such was the terror which this nondescript caused, that they made a hasty retreat to the shore, much alarmed. Since this circumstance took place, and but a few days since, Mr. Lindsey, who is well known here,[15] was riding near the margin of the Lake, when he saw, at the distance of 200 feet from him, some animal raise its head three or four feet above the surface of the water. He felt the security of the shore, and viewed the mysterious creature many minutes; when it disappeared and reappeared three times in succession. The head he described as being about three feet across the frontal bone, and having something of the contour of a "beef's head," but the neck tapering, and having the character of the serpent; color dingy, with large bright yellow spots. It turned its head from side to side with an easy motion, in apparent survey of the surrounding objects. Mr. L. is entitled to credibility. So convinced are many of the existence of the Monster, that some gentlemen in town have proposed an expedition to the lake, and by the aid of rafts to make an effort to capture the mysterious being which is a terror to the superstitious, but which becomes an object of interest to science, the naturalist, and philosopher.

A VISITER TO THE LAKE[16]

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[13] In accordance with a treaty with the Potawatomi ratified by Congress in 1826-1827, a corn mill and a blacksmith shop were erected at the outlet of Lake Manitou in the spring of 1827. *Treaties between the United States of America and the several Indian Tribes, from 1778 to 1837* (Washington, D.C., 1837), 404.

[14] See below, note 28.

[15] Probably John Lindsey, who opened the blacksmith shop at the outlet of Lake Manitou in 1827, see note 13. See also John Lindsey's letter to John Tipton on January 11, 1835, from Potawatomi Mill. Nellie A. Robertson and Dorothy Riker (eds.), *The John Tipton Papers* (3 vols., *Indiana Historical Collections*, XXIV, XXV, and XXVI, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1942), III, 101-102.

[16] The word is spelled *Visiter* in the first two signatures but *Visitor* at the end of the third article. Logansport, Indiana, *Telegraph*, July 21, 1838.

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The next week the following article appeared.

THE MONSTER

An expedition to the vicinity of Rochester for the purpose of surveying the "Devil's Lake," and making an effort to capture the Leviathan that inhabits its mysterious depths, it is generally believed would afford an exciting and interesting trip, worthy the consideration of every scientific mind. If every one who is desirous of joining the expedition would leave his name at the office of the Telegraph or that of the Herald, the full extent of the "Devil's Lake Expedition" may be determined on.

Now is the time that invites those interested in the capture of the terrific creature in its natatory gyrations. The weather—the aid of moon-lit nights, are favoring circumstances to effect a triumph over the "Indian terror." It would be well, probably to suggest the propriety of those holding a meeting who are favorable, and willing to support the effort to ascertain with certainty, whether the mysterious, old and cherished tradition of the Indians, is based upon a KNOWN species of fish, or serpent, or whether the field of science shall be extended by the discovery of a new species of animal, perculiar to this beautiful and not oft visited Lake Man-i-too.

There are many necessary preparatory steps to be taken, to ensure a successful issue of the expedition:—plans for the capture should be suggested; the policy, too, of the building of a large boat, and constructing rafts; and to advise upon the proper means, to the fullest extent. To determine the soundings of the chrystal depths of Man-i-too would be of itself ample requital to the enterprising who will perform the expedition.

The belief of the tradition of Man-i-too is daily becoming confirmed from many unexceptionable sources. Among them is the testimony of the Surveyors of the "Government Purchase" on the Lake,[17] who declared they saw a gigantic inhabitant of the waters which very much alarmed them. It is confidently asserted that a line of the surprising length of forty fathoms or 240 feet, has been once dropped and without effect.[18] It is truly astonishing that such a small inland lake, so remote too from the seas, should be as mysterious in its depths as it is in its legendary associations. But so it is. Boys! up with your harpoons and to the Lake Man-i-too. The weather, the season, the forest in all its leafy beauties, offer you inducements to leave the turmoil of every day life for a week, and seek relaxation in the exciting expedition to the Devil's Lake.

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[17] "I have been informed that Austin W. Morris, who completed the survey of the lake for the erection of the mills, said that several of his flag-men, while assisting in its survey had become alarmed and made to shore, declaring that they had seen a monster in the water—and for awhile it was difficult for him to get a man to carry the red flag. Whether they really saw anything terrible in the water, or their fears were merely the result of an excited imagination, after hearing the Indian legends, Mr. Morris never pretended to say." Cox, *Recollections of the Early Settlement of the Wabash Valley,* 137.

[18] The deepest point in the lake is about fifty feet. W. N. Logan *et al, Indiana Handbook of Geology* (Indianapolis, Indiana, 1922), 397.

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It is a subject now of interesting and scientific speculation whether the mysterious creature is a reproductive animal or not—whether amphibious or otherwise. The tradition of Man-i-too will ever lend a romantic interest to the lake and surrounding country; and when the native wilds shall have disappeared, and when

"The garden, orchard, mead, and furrow'd field,
The choicest products of the season yield,"

yet will the tradition be regarded by the infantine mind, and the superstitutious, as a theme of thrilling interest and terror—while by the scholar it will be cherished as a beautiful historic remembrance of an ill-fated race, whose history will increase in interest as the fleeting days gather upon their memories.

X. Y. Z.[19]

The following poem appeared in the same issue as the above-mentioned article.

TO THE NORTHERN MONSTER.

Dear Mr. Monster, Devil, Fish, or Snake,
Or whate'er other cognomen you wear,
Your neck's in danger in the "Devil's Lake,"
Unless you keep your head below the air.
An expedition soon will scour your range,
to take and kill you in your own dominion;
Oh! Homicide! or Snakicide! most strange!
Supported too, by popular opinion.
Look out old Scratch! a head & tail's at stake.

Keep dark and low. How deep's your famous lake?
How many hundred years, you old Infernal,
Have pass'd since in Manitto you began to revel?
Keeping the harmless fish in fear eternal,
And scaring young papoosies like the devil!
When, with her lover, the poor Indian girl
Roam'd near your lake, the fairest of Earth's daughters,
Say, did you not your long tail often twirl,
And pop your ugly head above the waters?
And was it not for thee right glorious fun,
To see the nude and tawny lovers run!

How many legends could your skinny Grace
Unfold to mortals, if you had a tongue!
The loves, and wars, of that strange Indian race,
Who never knew from what far land they sprung.

[19] Logansport, Indiana *Telegraph*, July 28, 1838.

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Hast thou beheld the Magalonix[20] grim,
Eating great trees, and drinking rivers down?
Was not the Mastadon afraid of him?
And tell us, pray, was not his color brown?
Speak! thou of AEsop's school the last,
And let us know the story of the past.

Look to thyself, old Monarch of the North!
Thy lake will soon be filled with hooks and ropes,
And many a tempting bait to lure thee forth,
That men may crush at once your head and hopes.
I do not wish to see thee come to harm,
Old Imp—and ergo you had better DIVE;
Your presence makes the weather rather warm;
The best thermometer stands now at 95;
But if you will not take a timely warning,
Why, I'm your most obedient. Good morning.

LOGAN.

July 27, 1838.

The following item appeared in the Logansport *Herald*, August 9, 1838:

Is the expedition to the Devil's Lake no go? Or were the notes of the horn which blew for volunteers, lost amid the din and clatter of the more sonorous sounds of candidates and electioneerists? For ourselves, if there *is* a big serpent, fish, muley nondescript, or other curious thing, in this lake, we should really like to see it captured. We have heard two or three persons say, should an expedition be gotten up, they would volunteer.

Two days later the *Telegraph* published another story about the monster.

THE MONSTER OF "THE DEVIL'S LAKE."

The well known tradition of the Indians respecting the Monster in the "Devil's Lake," and the many confirmatory statements of credible citizens, have placed the existence of a monstrous creature in the

[20] The author may well have in mind Thomas Ashe's discovery of the bones of the megalonix at Big Bone Licks, near Rising Sun, Indiana: "It is at this place, where the huge organick remains of the mammoth have been dug up in large quantities . . . . An early English traveller, who called his name Thomas Ashe, and who carried off to England several waogon loads of the bones, dug out of this Lick, gives it as his opinion that the animal was of the lion kind, called *megalonyx*, or great lion. He says that 'his shoulder blade was of the size of a breakfast table; that he was 60 feet in length, and 25 feet in height; that his figure was magnificent;—his looks determined; his gait stately, and his voice tremendous!'" *The Western Pilot, Containing Charts of the Ohio River and of the Mississippi* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1829), 33-34; Thomas Ashe, *Memoirs of Mammoth, and Various . . . Bones . . . Found in the Vicinity of the Ohio, Wabash, Illinois, Mississippi, Missouri, Osage, and Red Rivers, &c. &c.* (Liverpool, 1806), 40-58.

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waters of the lake, almost beyond a doubt. The length of the nondescript has been variously estimated, from forty to seventy feet; and the figure below represents its appearance according to the best idea that could be formed from the concurring statements of those by whom it has been seen. The Lake is situated in Fulton county, about 26 miles, in a north-eastern course, from Logansport; and it appears that every attempt to ascertain its depth has hitherto failed.

[A sketch of the monster appears at this point.]

We are requested to say that a Public Meeting of those who feel an interest in the proposed examination of Lake Man-i-too, will be held at the Seminary,[21] THIS EVENING, at half past six o'clock.

At this point, Jesse C. and David Douglass, the editors of the Logansport *Herald*,[22] take an active hand in the direction of the legend. They had printed a brief redaction of the *Telegraph's* first article in their issue of July 26, 1838, and the title of this article "FISH STORY—*A MONSTER*" suggested some skepticism, as did the tone of their brief item of August 9 quoted above. In the two selections given below from their issue of August 16, they express open contempt for the Lake Manitou story fostered by the *Telegraph* and offer a substitute monster in what is now known as Bass Lake.

The Monster, and a Monsterous Meeting.—A meeting, the object of which was to devise means for the capture of the monster of the devil's lake, was held in this place on Saturday evening last. We did not attend, but are informed that much eloquence was expended, and many plans suggested to accomplish this important object. Resolutions were adopted, committees appointed, and the *modus operandi* agreed upon. Drawings, we believe, were also exhibited, to show the facility with which "some things might be done as well as others."

We suppose his Snakeship, or Scalyship, or sulphuric-ship, as was suggested at the meeting, will be waited upon in due season, and a council of amenity held to effect the object of the pioneers in this great work.

Of late he has been seen very frequently, if we may be allowed to judge from the excellent likeness which has already been taken and published of his majesty.

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[21] The Eel River and Cass County Seminary in 1838 occupied a one-story brick building 20 x 40 feet facing Market Street. Helm (ed.), *History of Cass County, Indiana*, 374; W. Swift Wright, *Pastime Sketches* (n.p., 1907), 47-49, 96.

[22] The *Herald* commenced publication on August 1, 1837. It continued under the management and editorship of Jesse C. and David Douglass until it ceased publication on July 20, 1841. Helm (ed.), *History of Cass County, Indiana*, 454. The *Herald* apparently fought a losing battle with the *Telegraph*. See Robertson and Riker (eds.), *The John Tipton Papers*, III, 665, 823-824.

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THE MONSTER OF LAKE MAN-I-TOO.

As this story has obtained and is likely to obtain a credibility which it does not deserve, we have taken the pains to enquire of those who should know, the truth or falsity of the statements made, and find that there is very little if any foundation for the many garbled reports which are afloat in regard to this wondrous and extraordinary animal. Indeed, it would seem that it required more proof, in any event, to be believed. The story it seems in the first place, is predicated upon the superstitious traditions of the Indians, and receives additional strength from the statements of those who have witnessed the curiosity—some ten years ago, others more recently.

We are informed by the gentleman who located the Pottawatamie Mills, at the foot of this lake, that nothing of the Indian traditions ascribed to this Lake ever existed, and that when the mills were located, the Indians objected strongly upon the ground that they would sooner be in possession of the fishery than of the mills—the location, they thought, would in a measure, destroy the fishing. Mr. McCartney, one of the first settlers in this country,[23] and who has lived among the Indians for several years, says that the only Lake Man-i-too he has any knowledge of lies in Stark county[24] near an old road, known among the French traders as the Portage road, and is now called Cedar lake.[25] This lake lies near Tippecanoe river, and has ever been held in dread by the natives. A monster (the bones of which are now to be found) was once—so says the Indian tradition—killed on its banks, the mate of which escaped into the water. This gave rise to the fearful superstitions of the Indians,—a chief among whom, says Mr. McCartney, actually refused to shoot a swan playing on the waters of the Lake, so great was his fear of the Man-i-too, or Devil.

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[23] Edward McCartney traded with the Potawatomi and the Miami near Logansport from about 1820 to 1828. Charles B. Lasselle, "The Old Indian Traders of Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History*, II (1906), 9. Cox, in *Recollections of the Early Settlement of the Wabash Valley*, 137-139, described a visit in January, 1834, to "McCartney's, an old Indian Trader," who lived "on the south side of Turkey Creek Prairie, near the cluster of lakes that form the head of Tippecanoe. McCartney had married a daughter of Bennack, a half breed, and one of the head men among the Pottowattomies," and was "absent on a trip to Washington City, to procure a patent, as we were informed, for a section of reserve land, which he had married with his 'pretty young squaw.'" She was presumably the No-cum-mic-qua who is the prime authority for the legend of Cedar Lake given at length in the September 15 issue of the *Telegraph*. McCartney had left Ben Hurst, "one of Indiana's oldest lawyers," to guard his wife because Bennack "had become dissatisfied with the match, and declared the marriage a nullity." On March 4, 1834, John B. Chapman wrote John Tipton that McCartney had left his Indian wife and that she had married a Frenchman named Rousseau "according to the Indian mode." See Robertson and Riker (eds.) *The John Tipton Papers*, III, 33, 105.

[24] In 1838, Starke County was "recently formed, and organized." J. H. Colton, *The State of Indiana Delineated* (New York, 1838), 37.

[25] Bass Lake was called Cedar Lake by early surveyors and "was known by this name for many years." George S. Cottman and Max R. Hyman, *Centennial History and Handbook of Indiana* (Indianapolis, Indiana, 1915), 407.

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The story of the men engaged in building the mills, at that time, was not at all credited, but was ascribed to their ignorance or superstition—they having no doubt tortured the shadow of the canoe—which was of Indian manufacture, some 20 feet long, and had a figure head—into the shape of a huge monster, which their fright would not permit them to examine.

We should not have noticed this, did not the increasing notoriety which the story is obtaining demand it of us. Where there is no plausibility about a story, there is no use in its circulation.

"A Visitor to the Lake" replied to these aspersions in the *Telegraph* for August 18 with what is surely the wrath and language of an editor:

THE BONE EXPEDITION.

Some very grave and elaborate Editorial remarks appeared in the Herald of Thursday last—avowedly the result of much "pains," and careful investigation of the "Monster Story," which were characterized with the awful obligations of DUTY, to admonish the public, not to give credence to a tale destitute of plausibility, and which is "obtaining an undeserved increasing notoriety." Has the Senior editor of the Herald, the arrogance and vanity to imagine that he can exert an influence that shall arrest the "increasing notoriety" of the article which appeared in the Telegraph under caption of "The Devil's Lake?" His effort to effect it, is made in a spirit of pitiful, irritability of feeling, and mendacity of sentiment. But says the sapient editor: "we should not have noticed it, did not the increasing notoriety which the story is obtaining demand it of us." Truly a very handsome eulogy upon the merits of the story considering the impartial source whence it comes!

The article in the Herald forsooth! scarce merits a passing thrust, as it was concocted in the bitterness of chagrin, illiberality and guilty meanness of spirit. But we merely glance at the absurdity of the impotent effort to change a favorable public sentiment, towards a tradition connected with a people in whose fate the whole civilized world manifests the warmest interest. The attempt is preposterous as it is futile and ridiculous! But a week since friend Jesse was up in arms with highly polished harpoon prepared to start upon the expedition to "The Devil's Lake," to capture the terrific "critter." He announced himself "a pioneer in the great work." But now "a change has come over him like a summer cloud." Not however, until he had "taken the pains to inquire of those who should know the truth or falsity of the statements made" in the Telegraph. Now the Illuminary of the Herald says, that there is no plausibility about the "monster story"—that Lake Man-i-too is not Lake Man-i-too, but that Cedar Lake is Lake Man-i-too. Marvellous! That there is no "monster" at all. Yet, strange contradiction, there is a monster in Cedar Lake, enjoying its natatory gyrations "solitary and alone." And even more forsooth? The tale now is made truly monstrous. For, says the Herald, "a monster, (the bones of which are now to be found,) was once,

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so says the Indian tradition, killed on the banks of the Lake, the mate of which escaped in the water." This is valuable information—a scientific point is acquired, which decides the monster to be amphibious and a reproductive animal—or the Man-i-too's mate would not have made a rapid exit in the translucent bosom of the Lake. The Senior editor of the Herald assures us that after much pains-taking that these bones may be found high and dry upon the banks of Cedar Lake.

The capturing of the Leviathan of the Devil's Lake near Rochester, was always dubious—but the soundings alone were deemed of great interest. But the capturing of Man-i-too's bones is rendered certain. For one, then, I go in for the bones! The mystery which has shrouded the change in friend Jesse's sentiments comes intuitively to our mind! Of course as a member of the expedition to the Devil's Lake near Rochester, he could not aspire to a higher office than "Leftenant," whereas Jesse is ambitious of being a "capting," so he wants to get up "The Bone Expedition" in a sort of generous emulation with the Devil's Lake exploit. Truly noble! Friend Jesse makes a pitiful and uncalled for thrust at an old ally and friend—which is kindly and gently parried without a wish to hurt feelings naturally irritable. Ah! friend Jesse, thou didst wrong to effect a sneer at "the monster and monsterous" meeting and the eloquence displayed there. Jesse says that he did not attend the meeting, a circumstance monstrously regretted—for who like him could make the assembly shine?

A VISITER TO THE LAKE

This brief item immediately followed the article just quoted.

Messrs. Editors—

One of my neighbors says that the large creature in Lake Manitoo, which has frightened the Indians and whites so often, "is nothing more than that helliniferous atom of creation, Nick Biddle, in disguise.

Q.

Matters rested thus for two weeks so far as the newspapers were concerned. No expedition seems to have materialized. According to Sandford C. Cox, a "sickly season, combined with other circumstances," discouraged the volunteers from setting out.[26] Probably the growing tension between the Potawatomi and the whites at this time made the venture seem unadvisable.[27] The *Herald* on August 30, further discredited the Lake Manitou monster in the following brief article, its last upon the subject:

The Snake Story again.—The following extract of a letter from

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[26] Cox, *Recollections of the Early Settlement of the Wabash Valley*, 137.

[27] See above, note 4.

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Gen. Milroy[28] to a gentleman of this place, puts to flight any remaining credulity which may be placed to the credit of this story. We doubt, indeed, if this will not set at rest even the recent discovery of the Telegraph i. e. that the monster has degenerated into the monster of the U.S. Bank. In other words, that Nick Biddle is the Devil of Lake Man-i-too.

"I had noticed the snake-story to which you refer. It appears to be going the rounds, and I am unwilling to be referred to as vouching for the truth of a tale of this class in which the author has thought proper to introduce my name. I remember of hearing something of an Indian tradition that doubtless gave rise to this tale—for myself I never credited it as reality. You are aware of Indian credulity, as relates to that which they have received from their Fathers;—also, how many residing places they have imagined for their Man-i-toos,—their good or evil spirits. All that I learnt relative to the Lake, that never appears to have received the name of the "Devil's Lake," I suppose had its origin in some such tradition or fiction. So far as came to my knowledge, the Indians had no fear of being on the Lake; their fishing and night-hunting for deer, was common on it. The objection made by them to the erection of the mills, was that the dam at the outlet would injure their fishing.

"I will add, that if any are disposed to invent a "snake-story," I would thank them not to introduce my name into it; this class of tales does very well without a witness."

Two days later, the *Telegraph* printed a reply by "A Visitor to the Lake."

THE MONSTER STILL ALIVE

In the Herald of Thursday last, an extract from a letter received by a gentleman in town, from Gen. Milroy, was given publicity to, it would seem, to divest the "Monster Story" of the CREDIBLE testimony which is its basis. It becomes a subject of regret to the author of the tale of the "Devil's Lake," that Gen. Milroy should suppose that his name had been endorsed as "a witness," believing in the Indian tradition by [*sic*] which Lake Man-i-too is so interestingly associated, or in any way lending credit to a tale in which, it appears, Gen. Milroy gives no credence. But it would be truly a source of DEEP regret to the author, HAD he wa[i]ved that proper delicacy, and regard in the use of a name WITHOUT SANCTION, to give plausibility and credit to the tradition of the Devil's Lake.

The use of Gen. Milroy's name was not necessary or important, or in fact mentioned to give credence to the tale; and by reference to the

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[28] General Samuel Milroy, "one of the most noted men of the Wabash valley," was born in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, on August 14, 1780. He came to Carroll County Indiana, in the spring of 1826 and was a leader in establishing that county in 1827-1828 as well as the originator of the name "Delphi" for its county seat. He was a representative for Carroll County to the state legislature in 1837 and again in 1838. For further details of his life, see John C. Odell, *History of Carroll County* (Indianapolis, Indiana, 1916), 175-176.

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article that appeared in the Telegraph July 21st, it would be seen that Gen. Milroy's name was used only in connexion with the erection of the Pottawatt[a]mie Mills; and in what way that allusion to his name should bring conviction upon the mind of Gen. Milroy, that, he was therefore supposed to be a believer in the mysterious tradition of the Red Men, is somewhat enigmatical! These are the words used in the article referred to:—"When the Pottawattamie Mills were erecting some ten years since, at what is called the out-let of the Lake, the Monster was seen by men known to Gen. Milroy, under whose direction the Mills, I BELIEVE, were erected." If it be true that these Mills were superintended by the General, and the men in his employ saw the Monster, of course the men gave credence and were "witnesses," but [it] is not set up as a fact, or even intimated, that Gen. Milroy was a witness, nor did the writer of "the story" insinuate such a thing; therefore, it certainly appears to us, that it became unnecessary for Gen. M. to say that he is "unwilling to be referred to, as vouching for the truth of a tale of this class, in which the author has thought proper to introduce my name."

HAD Gen. Milroy's name been used in support of the "monster story"—HAD he really been brought in as "a witness," there is no doubt but the respectability of his name might have influenced the minds of some who are now incredulous in regard to the tradition.—Whatever efforts have been made to make "the story" appear destitu[t]e of plausability, or to attribute the Indian tradition as originating in the superstitious fears of the Aborigines, have certainly proved unavailing; for confirmatory testimony every day, adds interest and importance to the Devil's Lake. Consequently, the extract from the letter, in the opinion of many, does not "put to flight any remaining credulity which may be placed to the credit of this story." There is a diversity of opinion as to the location of Lake Man-i-too. At one time, Cedar Lake is Lake Man-i-too and the Devil's Lake—then it appears that the mysterious waters, in the vicinity of Rochester, are Lake Man-i-too, but not the Devil's Lake.—This is perplexing! It is a point which should be settled at this day. If it be a "BONE" of contention now, it will be, certainly, at some future time, a subject for learned disquisition and antiquarian regret. The mysterious depth of the Lake near Rochester, is truly surprizing, and the source of so vast a body of water becomes a matter of speculation with many. The Indians believe that there are subterraneous communications with Lake Max-in-euk-kee and the large lakes of the north; and though a theory originating with the Indians, it is not an improbable one, when we reflect upon the physical conformations of the earth.

Lake Man-i-too, at this time, is unusually high; and it is well known that the northern lakes are rising to an alarming degree.—Hence, it would appear, that these vest [*sic*] bodies of water are the source of this lovely little lake. What seems to substantiate the ABORIGINAL theory of the subterranean communication, is, that a "monster" was seen in a lake not far from Rochester, at the time of surveying the northern portion of Indiana, by a man in the employ of the engineer, who was very much terrified. Such was the testimony

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given in Logansport a short time since, by the gentleman in whose employ the man was.—Now, probably, this is the same "monster, the mate of which was captured on the banks of Cedar Lake." There is no doubt, then, that the "monster" is migratory, and makes excursions through the subterraneous passes from lake to lake, periodically.

In the mysterious workings of nature, it is known that subterraneous convulsions have raised mountains from the level—slides have buried vallies—the sea has receded from the land, and advanced upon other portions of the earth—rivers have changed their channels; and subterraneous caverns of miles in extent, are known to exist. All are mysterious, and which render the Indian theory concerning the lakes, far from being out of the pale of probability.

A VISITOR TO THE LAKE

This was the final contribution signed "A Visitor to the Lake" and the final word of the *Telegraph* upon Lake Manitou near Rochester. The last article of the *Telegraph* upon the monster of the Indiana Lakes appeared on September 15, 1838, and came from "X.Y.Z." and has to do exclusively with Cedar (now Bass) Lake.

INDIAN TRADITION
OF
CEDAR LAKE AND THE MAMMOTH

In a few years, how little shall we really know of what relates to the unfortunate race of Red Men, but from what has been but imperfectly gleaned from those who have lived and mingled among them for speculation and profit, rather than from an interest in their history, and social habits. The crumbling column, and disfigured statue, of Egyptian, and Grecian production, are cherished as mementos of a distinguished people, who have excelled in the arts. These relics tell of the age in which they were fostered, and proclaim the advanced state of human achievements, and the sublimities of the arts of that day.—But what monumental pile shall stand, that future generations may point at, to commemorate the ages in which the unfortunate Indians lived? Though these people, rude and ignorant of the arts, will leave but little more than their curious, rude and simple sepulchres of logs and bark, that must inevitably perish before the corroding hand of time, or the irresistable plough-share of obtruding civilization; and though the artist has perpetuated the features of many of the distinguished Warriors, Headmen and Orators of the Red Nations, and the poet, too, has sung of their sorrows and their wrongs; yet, let us, while we can, rescue from oblivion, all that concerns a people that are rapidly disappearing from the theatre of human action, known alike for fortitude and valor.

We cherish the old ballads of the days of chivalry, and feel interested in the superstitions of the days when the mind was shrouded in mental darkness; and as we glance in retrospection upon the mazes of buried ages, and reflect upon our own days of human rights and

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religious freedom, before whose radiant star of mental regeneration superstition has partially disappeared, we may well feel proud of our advanced and enlightened civilization. Will not, then, the traditions, history, and thoughts of the Red Men interest the civilized world? Many of the lakes in the fair region of the north of Indiana, are associated with Kee-caw-bas and Man-i-tous. There is a curious and interesting Indian tradition associated with a sparkling lake in Stark county of this state, about four miles in length, and a mile in width, varying but little. The margin of the lake is bounded by occasional bluffs or abrupt banks of no great elevation, and beautifully timbered. Here and there, are green slopes extending from the margin of the lake in gentle ascent, but upon which the Indians never encamp, from the religious awe in which they hold these hallowed waters; which, to the whites, are familiarly known as Cedar Lake, but which the Indians call Man-i-tou-ken, or the Lake of the Devil's Bones.— It is a well known custom among the Indians, to make the squaws the repository of their history and traditions; and though it is a SAVAGE custom yet it may be deemed a felicitous one, for as it is the mother who gives shape, form and character to the infantine mind, so are the squaws, from their habits, suited to impart to the papooses the tone of the tribe. The tradition of Man-i-tou-ken, was related to an Indian trader by a squaw, who was well known in the Pottawattamie nation by the name of No-cum-mick-qua. She was a descendant of the line of the chiefs of To-bin-a-bey; and therefore the tradition is entitled to the credit of legitimacy. When the Pottawattamies located south of the great lakes, and north of the Wabash, a succession of many centuries since, the land was barren, and the sun shed his refulgent rays upon the open surface of a country not bold nor striking, but diversified with small lakes of various depths. There was but little timber to fling the cool and refreshing shades upon the earth for the game to repose it. At that time, which was so remote, the mighty Mammoth, whose history, like that of the early period of the Indian nations, is enveloped in doubt, mystery and obscurity, was a habitant of the earth, and was indigeneous to the great western territory, of which Indiana was a part. Recent discoveries, but a short distance from Logansport, which are known and familiar to every one here, substantially corroborate the fact, that the Mammoth did once exist in this section of country. These gigantic animals were a terror to the aborigines of the north, among whom they caused much tribulation and anxiety; for the game and all habitable creatures but man, were fast disappearing before the voracity of the mysterious Mammoth, whose pomers [*sic*] of mastication may be imagined by the citation of a tooth measuring nearly two feet—and it seems it was hailed by the Indians as a happy decree, that the evil or bad Man-i-tou would no longer scourge them by his presence. The Kee-caw-bas, who were good spirits that inhabited the deep waters of lake Michigan, loved the Indians, and took pity upon their impending dangers of extinction by the rapid disappearance of the game before the terrible and repeated aggressions of the ponderous Mammoth. The Kee-caw-bas, who were diminutive creatures, like unto the muskrat, came

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forth from the clear depths of lake Michigan, which they inhabited, and passed over the barren land, when they found the Mammoth walking forth upon the verdant banks of the Tippecanoe river, in majestic dignity, a conscious monarch of the land and a terror to the whole of the animal creation, beneath whose ponderous weight and massive foot, every leaf, bud and flower was crushed. The Kee-caw-bas, or Man-i-tous, discovered three Mammoths on the Tippecanoe river, to whom they avowed a hatred which a final extinction would only gratify, for the rapid disappearance of the game was about to end the chase. Two of the Mammoths were females, and one of them escaped from the destruction of the Kee-caw-bas, enciente [*sic*] and disappeared in the translucent waters of Man-i-tou-ken, which is about eleven miles from the Tippecanoe river. From that day to the present time, the lake while it is reverenced for its hallowedness by the Indians, yet it is regarded with thrilling terror and dread. The lake abounds in many species of fish, but the Red Men, from superstitious dread, or from a desire not to disturb these sacred and sparkling waters, never avail themselves of a bounteous providence. No Indian was ever seen gliding in his canoe upon its glassy surface. The Loon sits upon its bosom and screams its melancholy note and flaps its wi[n]gs undisturbed; for the Red Man will not fire his rifle, least the sound should disturb the slumbering Mammoth in her repose in the chrystal depths, and whose terrible desolating work on the earth many centuries since is remembered—for the Indian mother, in narrating the tradition, never failed to awaken a superstitious dread in the minds of the poppooses. The Kee-caw-bas, having caused the Mammoth's extinction, retreated to lake Michigan, and disappeared in its depths for ever.

Tho tradition further states, that a crazy Indian, who was encamped with a band of Pottawattamies upon the banks of the Tippecanoe river, discovered the bones of the Mammoth, and in a fit of desperate insanity, threw them into a deep ravine which connects itself with the river. This place is called Man-i-tou-ken, or the place of the Devil's bones, even to this day. The banks of the river at this spot are of more than their general elevation, and the water remarkably deep. Occasionally the bones of the Mammoth are washed from the ravine, and many of them irrecoverable; but the hope is yet entertained that the skulls have not been dislodged from the repository in which it has laid many centuries.

Whatever interest or credit the tradition is entitled to, every mind must decide for itself. But the existence of the bones claims credibility; for they have been seen by many, among whom is our respected friend Mr. M'Cartney,[29] who is well known here, and by whose consent, we have the use of his name in making these statements. Upon his veracity no one can cast a shadow of doubt. He, also, is the surviving husband of her whose name is familiar to the Pottawattamies as No-cum-mic-qua.

X.Y.Z.

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[29] For identification of McCartney and his wife No-cum-mic-qua, see above, note 23.

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The printing of the *Telegraph's* last story upon the Indian monster coincided nearly to the day with the passing from the state of the last party of Potawatomi.[30] The monster seems to have departed from the lakes with the Indians. The following unsigned editorial, which appeared in the *Telegraph* nine months later, June 15, 1839, in all probability from the hand of John Brown Dillon, seems a fitting valedictory to the legend:

LAKES OF INDIANA.

The scenery of the "thousand isles" of the St. Lawrence, and of the "highlands" on the Hudson, have been made subjects of history and themes of romance, while the wild, beautiful and gorgeous scenery of northern Indiana is almost unknown to those who have never travelled among it. Hundreds of small, clear Lakes with sandy shores, from one to five miles in circumference, decorate and enliven the face of the country. At one moment the eye of the traveller rests upon cultivated fields, fair hamlets, and bright sheets of pure water glittering in the sunlight. Suddenly the scene changes, and the view extends, through "oak openings" and over a gently undulating surface covered with rich and variegated wild flowers, as far as the eye can reach. Wild deer are often seen bounding in herds over the plains, and flocks of white swans croak their hoarse notes at sunset upon the waters of the Lakes. Almost every Lake is invested with interest by the legendary lore of the Indians who have inhabited the country for centuries, and whose traditions, if faithfully recorded and transmitted to posterity, will be regarded as deeply interesting memorials of a strange race of "barbarians" who perished under the "protection" of their civilized brethren.

The *Telegraph* could feel that it had done at least something to preserve the Indians' "legendary lore."

[30] See above, note 4.

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